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*An Experiment
in Embroidery
Design*

THE ARTS COUNCIL 1950

FOREWORD

It is refreshing to find new ideas being infused into the craft of embroidery, for which this country has been justly famed in the past, and in which our technical skill still remains high, though so much new work has been marred for many years by its marked weakness in design and colour. The Arts Council has welcomed the invitation of the Needlework Development Scheme to organize with their assistance and co-operation an exhibition of an interesting experiment which they have carried out since the war. The work of Mary Kessell as an original and sensitive painter and draughtsman is known to many, so that her choice by the Needlework Development Scheme as the first artist to produce new designs for embroidery was a singularly happy one. It was not enough, however, to produce new designs—which Mary Kessell has achieved with singular felicity—but also to find a group of artists who could translate them into the terms of the craft. For this task the Bromley College of Art were asked to supply a team of embroideresses from their teaching staff and students, who would interpret the designs. (As can be seen, the designs in this exhibition have already been frequently used as prototypes for embroideries.) This team is to be congratulated on the results of all their hard work and enthusiasm, which will be evident to those who see the exhibition. It is hoped that public interest will be stimulated by the experiment.

The organizers are grateful to Mr S. A. Smithers, a student of the Royal College of Art, who has been responsible for the design of the show cases and for the presentation of the exhibition.

SECTION ONE

1. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1a. Machine worked sample by Frances Beal
- 1b. Sample glove. Machine embroidery by Frances Beal
- 1c. Sample fawn evening glove. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal
- 1d. Machine worked sample by Frances Beal
- 1e. Grey evening gloves. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal
2. Original sketch by Mary Kessell

- 2a. Evening bag. Hand embroidered by Joan Whayman, of Bromley College of Art
- 3. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 3a. Machine worked sample by Lilian Willey of Bromley College of Art
- 3b. Evening bag. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal

SECTION TWO

- 1. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1a. Machine worked sample by Lilian Willey
- 1b. Net mat. Machine embroidered by Lilian Willey
- 2. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 2a. Silver brush. Machine embroidery by Frances Beal
- 2b. Silver hand mirror. Machine embroidery by Frances Beal
- 3. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 3a. Silver brush. Machine embroidery by Frances Beal
- 4. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 4a. Trinket box. Machine embroidered by Lilian Willey
- 5. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 5a. Fan. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal

SECTION THREE

- 1. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1a. Dinner mat. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal
- 2. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 2a. Dinner mat. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal
- 3. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 3a. Dinner mat. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal
- 4. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 4a. Dinner mat. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal
- 5. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 5a. Dinner mat. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal
- 6. Dinner mat. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal from sketch 2 in Section Two

SECTION FOUR

1. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1a. Machine worked sample by Lilian Willey
- 1b. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1c. Tablecloth. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal
2. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 2a. Bib. Hand embroidered by Iris Hills, ARCA, of the Bromley College of Art
3. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 3a. Hand worked sample by Moira White (aged 14) of the Bromley College of Art
- 3b. Hand worked sample by Joan Whayman of the Bromley College of Art
- 3c. Tray cloth. Hand embroidered by Joan Whayman

SECTION FIVE

1. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1a. Cot cover. Hand embroidered by Joan Whayman
- 1b. Hand worked sample by Maureen Chatfield (aged 15) of the Bromley College of Art
- 1c. Small tray. Hand embroidery by Joan Whayman
2. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 2a. Hand worked sample by Edna Risby (aged 15) of the Bromley College of Art
- 2b. Mirror. Hand embroidered by Joan Whayman

SECTION SIX

1. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1a. Cushion. Hand embroidered by Joan Whayman
2. Original collage by Mary Kessell
- 2a. Cushion. Hand embroidered by Marion Campbell

SECTION SEVEN

1. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1a. Machine worked sample by Lilian Willey
- 1b. Child's frock. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal
2. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 2a. Baby's jacket and bonnet. Machine embroidered by Lilian Willey

SECTION EIGHT

1. Machine worked sample by Frances Beal, from sketch 4 in Section Three
- 1a. Tray cloth. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal
2. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 2a. Hand worked sample by Eunice Hixson (aged 15) of the Bromley College of Art
- 2b. Hand worked sample by Joan Whayman
- 2c. Cot cover. Hand embroidered by Marion Campbell

SECTION NINE

1. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1a. Machine worked sample by Frances Beal
- 1b. Frock. Machine embroidered by Frances Beal
2. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 2a. Hand worked sample by Anne Anderson (aged 15) of the Bromley College of Art
- 2b. Hand worked sample by Joan Whayman
- 2c. Machine worked sample by Denise Mitchell (aged 15) of the Bromley College of Art
- 2d. Machine worked sample by Denise Mitchell
- 2e. Hand worked sample by June Chilman (aged 14) of the Bromley College of Art
- 2f. Curtain. Machine embroidered by Denise Mitchell

SECTION TEN

1. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1a. Curtain. Hand embroidered by Marion Campbell
2. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 2a. Hand worked sample by Barbara Stringer (aged 14) of the Bromley College of Art
- 2b. Hand worked sample by Barbara Stringer
- 2c. Cloth. Machine embroidered by Janet Eagleton (aged 15) of the Bromley College of Art
- 2d. Lampshade. Machine embroidered by Lilian Willey

SECTION ELEVEN

1. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1a. Firescreen. Hand embroidery by Joan Whayman
- 1b. Stool. Hand embroidery by Joan Whayman

SECTION TWELVE

1. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 1a. Hand worked sample by Joan Whayman
- 1b. Christening robe. Hand embroidered by Marion Campbell
2. Original sketch by Mary Kessell
- 2a. Curtain. Machine embroidered by Lilian Willey

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